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SENATOR ALLARD ANNOUNCES \$40 MILLION INCLUDED IN DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION BILL TO CREATE BUFFER ZONES AROUND MILITARY INSTALLATIONS

Fort Carson on list to receive conservation funding

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Wayne Allard (R-Colorado) announced Monday that the FY 2006 Defense Authorization bill approved by the Senate Armed Services Committee includes \$40 million for conservation buffer zones around military installations including Fort Carson in Colorado Springs. The legislation next goes to the full Senate for approval.

The Committee's report recommends that this money be spent on six specific U.S. Army buffer zone projects: Fort Carson; Fort A.P. Hill, Virginia; Fort Campbell, Kentucky; Fort Sill, Oklahoma; Fort Ripley, Minnesota and Fort Hood, Texas. The amount authorized by the Armed Services Committee is \$20 million more than the President's budget request for these projects.

"This funding will allow us to begin addressing the problem of urban encroachment around Fort Carson," Senator Allard said. "It will strengthen the Army's maintenance of a premier training facility while protecting critical wildlife habitat and open space."

In February, Senator Allard and Colorado 5th District Representative Joel Hefley introduced the Fort Carson Conservation Act of 2005, S. 320 and H.R. 632, in the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives. This legislation directs the Army to establish a pilot program by entering into agreements with willing sellers to purchase conservation easements around Fort Carson. These easements, to be administered by the Nature Conservancy, will prevent the encroachment of development upon the base while preserving the habitat and open space surrounding the base.

The Allard-Hefley bill enjoys widespread support from the local community and elected officials, including the Greater Colorado Springs Chamber of Commerce, the Colorado Department of Transportation, Great Outdoors Colorado, the Nature Conservancy, Colorado Springs Mayor Lionel Rivera, Colorado Springs City Councilman Jerry Heimlicher, El Paso County Commissioner Chairman Jim Bensberg, El Paso County Commissioner and Vice Chair Sallie Clark, El Paso County Commissioner Wayne Williams and El Paso County Commissioner Dennis Hisey.

Overall, the Senate Armed Services Committee recommended funding of \$441.6 billion in budget authority for defense programs in FY 2006, an increase of 3.1 percent above the amount authorized by the Congress for FY 2005. Of the total amount \$50 billion was authorized to support the day-to-day military operations of American troops in Afghanistan and Iraq.

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